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ABSTRACT

This report described the Tri-School Plan initiated by the Board of Education in Washington, D.C. to equalize educational opportunities in an urban renewal area. Under the plan, children attended the Syphax School for grades 1 and 2; the Amidon School for grades 3 and 4; the Bowen School for grades 5 and 6. Children from various socioeconomic strata were thus grouped together for the first time. The Tri-School Plan hoped to increase community harmony, encourage and promote parental involvement, and upgrade the quality of education. The Plan was evaluated by the Stanford Achievement Tests (SAT) and the Ohio Social Acceptance Scale (OSAS), in-depth interviews of the three school principals and nine teachers, and questionnaires completed by 50 percent of the parents involved. The results of the SAT for grades 1, 3, and 5 were presented in three tables showing significant achievement scores in arithmetic and paragraph meaning. The results of the OSAS were presented statistically for grades 3 and 5; social relations in grade 5 were positive. Principal, teacher, and parent reactions were favorable to the Plan. Recommendations were made for special classes for emotionally disturbed children, new curricula, teacher consultation on instructional aids for the classroom, and more communication among the three schools. The appendixes contained the principal and teacher interview schedules, and the parent questionnaires. (BRB)

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SOUTHWEST SEMINAR AND DEVELOPMENT PROJECT

OF THE DISTRICT OF COLUMBIA PUBLIC SCHOOLS

REPORT OF EVALUATION 1967-1968

July 1, 1968

SP 006 117

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Introduction

The Southwest area of Washington is one which has recently undergone the effects of urban renewal. For many years it has been populated almost entirely by Negro disadvantaged families. In recent years, however, high rise luxury apartments and town houses have been built. This has radically changed the complexion of the community by bringing in large numbers of middle class families. Because of the location of the new buildings, the middle socioeconomic groups at first almost exclusively attended the Amidon School. In order to equalize educational opportunity, the Board of Education initiated the Tri-School Plan. Under this plan, the children in the whole Southwest area attended: the Syphax School during grades 1 and 2; the Amidon School during grades 3 and 4; and the Bowen School during grades 5 and 6. To say the least, this merger had a controversial effect on the community. At the risk of simplifying the situation one might say that upper socioeconomic strata were generally against and

lower socioeconomic strata were generally in favor of the new plan.

In order to insure the success of the program, efforts were made in two directions jointly. First, a number of seminars were started which hoped to increase community harmony and encourage and promote more parental involvement in the schools. Second, a serious attack was made to upgrade the quality of education within each school.

This evaluation concerns itself mainly with the impact of the project on the schools. Although a large portion of the seminar was directed toward improving community relations and satisfaction, it was felt that if this is successful it could partially be reflected in improved schools and parental satisfaction with the program. Despite the obvious disadvantage in such an approach, limitations in funds and personnel required that the total program be treated as a single global unit. Time and money did not allow consideration of each aspect of the program as an individual problem area.

Achievement

In order to test out the effect of the Tri-Schools on the academic achievement of pupils, comparable groups of Tri-School and control children were tested during the week of April 1-5. Samples of three classes each were randomly chosen in grades 1, 3 and 5. After consultation with school personnel it was decided that the Stanford Achievement Tests should be employed for this purpose. This test battery was chosen because of both its intrinsic value as a measuring instrument, and the degree to which it agreed with the objectives and content offered in the schools. Figure I below presents the schedule of subtests chosen.

Figure I

Subtests of Stanford Achievement Form Selected

Grade	Test	Subtests
1	Primary I	Word Reading Arithmetic
2	Primary II	Paragraph Meaning Science and Social Studies
5	Intermediate II	Paragraph Meaning Science Arithmetic Applications

All tests were administered in two (2) sittings.

For control purposes comparable classes in a similar district were selected. In addition, the analysis of covariance was employed to partial out differences in initial reading ability between the two groups of pupils in each grade. The Gates-MacGintie Reading Test administered in June of 1967, was employed as a covariate. Table I presents the first-grade results.

Table I

Results of Analysis of Stanford Achievement Test Data for Grade 1

	Experimental		Control
		Word Reading	
N	68		96
M	14.62		14.49
SD	5.47		5.18
M dif		.13	
+ -		N.S.	
		Arithmetic	
N	68		96
M	23.26		19.68
SD	10.90		9.70
M dif		3.58	
+ -		2.16 (P= <.05)	

As indicated in Table I, the experimental pupils exceeded their control counterparts in arithmetic. No appreciable differences were found in word reading. Table II presents similar data for the grade 3 pupils. In this analysis groups were statistically equated for initial reading ability through the use of the analysis of covariance.

Table II

Results of Analysis of Stanford Achievement Test Data for Grade 3

	Experimental		Control
		Word Meaning	
N	58		80
M(adj)	30.18		30.49
SD	13.06		12.67
F		N.S.	
		Science	
N	58		80
M(adj)	19.18		16.50
SD	6.14		6.34
F		13.50 (<.05)	
		Mathematics	
N	58		80
M(adj)	20.42		17.82
SD	8.22		7.03
F		7.18 (<.05)	

Adj. = adjusted

As indicated in Table II, significant differences in favor of the experimental group were found in science and mathematics. Differences in word meaning were negligible. Table III presents the summary of the fifth grade achievement test data.

Table III

Results of Analysis of Stanford Achievement Test Data for Grade 5

	Experimental		Control
		Paragraph Meaning	
N	49		72
M(adj)	24.75		19.69
SD	11.61		11.30
F		24.71 (P= <.05)	
		Social Studies	
N	49		72
M(adj)	27.16		25.85
SD	10.09		10.79
F		N.S.	
		Arithmetic	
N	49		49
M(adj)	11.97		8.54
SD	5.50		5.55
F		62.06 (P= <.05)	

Adj. = Adjusted

As indicated above significant and meaningful differences in favor of the experimental group were found in paragraph meaning and arithmetic application. No significant difference were shown in social studies. Generally, it would seem that the Tri-School Plan is having an effect on achievement. One should be cautious, however, in saying that this effect occurred safely because of the Seminar. Factors such as special programs, smaller class sizes, etc. may be adding to this effect.

Social Interaction in the Classroom

In order to get a measure of social interaction in the classroom, the Ohio Social Acceptance scale was modified for oral administration and was given to third and fifth grade classes on whom achievement test data was available. The nature of the instrument precluded its administration to first grade classes. Testing with this instrument was carried out during the week of April 1-5.

In the administration of this scale, each child is provided with a roster of all the children in the class. He is asked to go down the list and indicate his: very very best friends with a 1; his good friends with a 2; those who are not friends but O.K. with a 3; those he doesn't know with a 4; and all others with a 5. A copy of the scale may be found in the Appendix. Table IV presents these results.

Table IV

Frequency and Percent of Responses to Ohio Social Acceptance Scale

Response	Grade 3 %	Grade 5 %
1. Very very best friends	23.67	46.48
2. Good friends	14.18	18.65
3. Not friends but O.K.	16.35	18.65
4. Don't know them	7.49	13.76
5. All others	38.31	2.45

As indicated in Table IV, social relations in the fifth grade were extremely positive. Forty-six percent of the responses were in the highest category, and all but 16 percent may be considered positive categories. Generally, it might be concluded that feelings in these classes were quite good.

Principal Reaction

No evaluation of this kind could be complete without the reactions of school personnel to the program. Toward this end the three principals of the Southwest Seminar Schools were interviewed in depth on various phases of the program. The personnel involved were extremely candid. No attempts were made to whitewash either the school system or the program, and they willingly reported both positive and negative aspects.

Community Involvement

Although community involvement in the Tri-School Project is still somewhat limited, principals seemed to feel that participation is increasing. They cited growing attendance at P. T. A. meetings, and less reluctance on the part of parents to come in to talk about their children's problems as evidence in this area. They credited special projects such as the "Greely Booths" with some of this increased involvement. The three principals did agree, however, that many of the hard-core disadvantaged were still reluctant to come into the schools.

Parental Satisfaction

Principals felt that they had little basis for judging parental satisfaction. One mentioned that to a large extent those that they see are the ones that are sent for because of some infraction on the part of a child. The most dissatisfied groups (middle class Negro and Caucasian) have for the most part withdrawn their children. The feelings of the groups that have been active in the school seem extremely favorable.

Curriculum and Supervision

In the area of curriculum, principals agreed that a great deal of work was still necessary. First, they called for more and better curriculums that would help teachers with the new heterogeneous classes. The biggest problem area seemed to be reading. Second, they mentioned that better communication between the three schools on the coordination of their curriculums, was necessary. Suggestions in this area ranged from the idea of a "Super Principal" who would coordinate the three schools, to regular formal curriculum meetings.

One area where they agreed a good deal of additional help was

necessary, is the orientation and supervision of the teachers. Principals find that the time that they can devote to supervision of classroom teachers is quite limited, since most of their time is spent on administrative and disciplinary duties. Assistant principals for each school were recommended to help give the classroom teachers more support from supervisory personnel.

Reaction to new materials

The Tri-Schools have been given access to many new sets of materials. These include electric typewriters, Craig readers, SRA reading labs, etc. Most of the comment on individual units was favorable. Principals did, however, express the need for more of a voice in the particular materials that are sent to their schools. It seems that often material arrives before they have had a chance to express any opinions (either positive or negative) about them. The placement of the materials that do arrive is spotty in character, as not enough of any one set of materials is available for a unified and continuous program.

Pupil Outcomes

Principals felt that they had no objective data to evaluate changes in achievement in the Tri-Schools. Nevertheless, they all seemed to feel that pupil motivation and attitudes seemed to be improving. Severe disciplinary problems existed after school hours at the beginning of the reorganization. Though the problem was far from over during the later portion of the semester, it seemed to be somewhat improved. A large number of disciplinary problems within the school still exist. This may indicate the need for counselor services.

One additional difference between the Tri-Schools and other schools mentioned by principals was a lack of the kind of school pride and spirit on the part of pupils that often comes with six years in one school.

General

All principals agreed that it would be impossible to abolish the Tri-School Project in that the community was now committed to it. Nevertheless, they expressed needs for a number of things that would improve the program. First, better trained teachers, assistant

principals and/or guidance counselors to give them more support. More and better space was a second need expressed. In the curriculum area they wish more of a voice in the equipment sent to the schools as well as more coordination between the curriculums of the three schools.

Teacher Reaction

The nine teachers in the classes to whom achievement tests were administered were given intensive interviews on their reactions to the program. The interviews were conducted during the time the tests were given. All teachers were interviewed individually and they were assured of their anonymity.

New Materials

As indicated earlier, a number of new materials were introduced in the Tri-Schools. These included Sullivan Readers, Borg-Warner testing machines, SRA reading labs, Bank Street readers, etc. Generally, teachers were favorably inclined toward the potential of all these materials. They complained, nevertheless, that little time was spent in training them in the integration of these devices into the regular curriculum. Some felt that for this reason much potential good was not being realized.

Curriculum

The teachers in these schools were subjected to two kinds of reorganization at approximately the same time: the creation of the

two-grade school and second the abolition of tracking. Seven of the nine teachers interviewed felt that the current curriculum plan was inadequate. Nevertheless, as a group they did not seem to be overly concerned about this. The sentiment was expressed that the good teacher avoids too much reliance on the planned curriculum. When asked in which areas the curriculum was most adequate, three cited reading, and one arithmetic. No one area emerged as showing unique problems.

Attitudes Toward School

Four of the nine teachers reported an improvement in attitudes toward school this year. Five seemed to indicate negative impressions in this area.

Discipline

Six of the nine teachers reported an increase in disciplinary problems since the start of the Tri-Schools. Those that elaborated seemed to indicate that the abolition of tracking and the admission of emotionally disturbed children into the regular classes was the cause of many problems in that these children serve as a negative catalyst for the others.

Advantages of the Tri-School Plan

Teachers were asked to indicate the major advantages of the Tri-School Plan. Most indicated that the greater expenditure of money brought in new materials. The second most often mentioned item was the specialist teachers. One teacher in a first grade cited the lack of the negative influence of older children.

Disadvantages

Seven of the nine teachers failed to see any disadvantages in the Tri-School Plan. One mentioned the lack of teacher preparation for the new organization and another the lack of coordination between the curriculums of the three schools, especially in mathematics.

General

Eight of the nine teachers were in favor of continuing the Tri-School Plan. Half of these expressed a need for more parent contact. One teacher suggested widening the age span of pupils in each school. Some desire was also expressed for more of the equipment shown at the Catholic University summer workshops.

Parental Reaction

One of the goals of the Southwest Seminar is to build community satisfaction with the schools. No effort in this direction can be accomplished without first satisfying the parents of children who are attending those schools. This portion of the evaluation was conducted in two phases. The first phase involved individual interviews with approximately 15 parents. Responses from these interviews were used to construct a questionnaire which was sent to all parents in each of nine classes covering grades 1, 3 and 5 of the Tri-Schools. Considering the nature of the population, it was decided to keep the questionnaire in simple language and to require no more than checked (✓) responses in a closed-end format. The questionnaires were anonymous. They were distributed by classroom teachers. After responding, parents placed the questionnaires in sealed envelopes and returned them to the classroom teachers through their children. Teachers mailed the sealed envelopes directly to the investigators. Ninety-four parents, representing about 50 percent of those polled, returned the questionnaires. Table V presents these results.

Table V

Responses of 94 Parents to Questionnaire in Percents

1a. How do you feel about your child's progress in school this year?

Poor: 5.32 Fair: 25.53 Good: 47:87 Very good: 21.28

b. How does his (her) progress compare with last year?

Much worse: 1.06 Worse: .00 Same: 26.60 Better: 53.19 Much better: 19.15

2a. How does he (she) like school this year?

Dislikes school: 2.13 Neutral: 17.02 Likes school: 80.85

b. How does this compare with last year?

Much worse: .00 Worse: 1.06 Same: 38.30 Better: 32.98 Much better: 27.66

3. How much reading does he do this year as compared with last year?

Less: 2.13 Same: 34.04 More: 63.83

4. Have you attended any meetings for parents at the school during school year?

Yes: 61.70 No: 38.30

5. Have you met with your child's teacher to discuss his progress in school at any time?

Yes: 78.72 No: 21.28

As indicated in Table V, parents were generally satisfied with their children's progress in school. Of the 94 respondents, 69 percent rated their children's progress as either good or very good. Most parents seemed to detect an increase in overall progress during the past year. Above 80 percent of the parents responded that their children "liked school" this year, and they seemed to indicate that pupils' feelings about school improved over the previous year. Reading too, on the whole, seemed to have increased during the first full-year in the Tri-School Plan. Sixty-two percent of the respondents reported attending parent meetings and 79 percent reported speaking to teachers to discuss their children's progress.

Although admittedly this could represent a biased sample, it is still felt that the large amount of positive feelings expressed shows that progress in this area is definitely being made.

Summary and Conclusions

Pupil Outcomes

A. Achievement. The accomplishments in the area of pupil achievement in the Southwest Seminar schools was impressive. On the first grade level no significant difference in word reading was observed. Differences of about one-third of a standard deviation in favor of the Tri-Schools were achieved in arithmetic. For third grade students, again no significant differences in verbal comprehension were obtained. Science and mathematics, showed differences of approximately half a standard deviation in favor of the Tri-School pupils. For fifth grade pupils, significant differences were found in paragraph meaning and arithmetic.

B. Social Relations. As indicated by the results of the Ohio Social Relations Scale, results in this area might be considered quite positive. The most encouraging results were found among the older children.

C. Attitudes Toward School. Opinion in this area seemed to vary from teacher to teacher. No meaningful trend seems to exist.

D. Disciplinary Problems. Many behavior problems still exist in the Tri-Schools, as in many schools in similar areas. The most serious problem -- fights between disadvantaged and middle-class pupils on the way home from school, seems to be improved greatly. It must be remembered, that this is partially due to the exodus of the middle class from the schools.

Curriculum

The creation of the Tri-School Project as well as the abolition of tracking has created serious problems in this area. A need does exist for new curricula. A very strong need exists under the present reorganization for better communication and planning of courses of study across the three schools. Some remedies that might be considered in this area are as follows:

1. Formal curriculum meetings between the principals of the three schools. An elected chairman might be indicated here.

2. Rotation of teachers (on a limited basis) among the three schools.

3. As a matter of general policy, copies of all textbooks and/or materials in general use in any of the three schools, should appear in a separate section of the resources center of each school.

Parental Reaction

Parental reaction to the Tri-Schools seems very positive. Parents generally reported satisfaction with their children's progress and an improvement over the previous year. Consideration should be given to a joint Parents Association for the three schools. This would help to overcome problems expressed by persons with children in more than one school.

Reaction of School Personnel

Generally, teachers and supervisors are in favor of the present organization. Although problems do exist, they feel a strong sense of identification with the program.

Integration

To the extent that integration was a goal of this program, it has failed in this area. As reported by principals the middle class, both Negro and Caucasian, has largely abandoned the Tri-Schools.

Little can be done to reverse this trend except continued efforts in the direction of building quality education and publicizing all efforts in this direction. Nevertheless, if experience in other areas is any indication, it is unlikely that the middle class will return.

Special Classes

If possible, under current rules, an effort to isolate children with special emotional problems should be considered. This would be helpful in reducing disciplinary problems in regular classes.

New Innovative Materials

The continued introduction of new materials and technology into the Tri-Schools, has yielded excellent results especially in the area of community relations. Still a great deal of research is necessary on the effectiveness of these devices and their software with the disadvantaged child. If possible, materials should be introduced slowly on a very limited basis with the view toward allowing controlled research on each device. Teachers and supervisors should be involved more in the decision making processes of determining what materials are introduced and how these are to be integrated into the normal courses of study.

General Recommendation

The Tri-Schools seem to have met with a good deal of success in both the area of pupil outcomes and parental satisfaction with the schools. This would justify the continuation of the project. Better coordination of the program within each building is still necessary. This could be achieved by placing more authority in the hands of the principals. All instructional and non-instructional programs (such as: the community coordinators office) should be directly supervised by a governing board consisting of the three principals, eith either a leader elected from among them or a "super principal" appointed for this purpose.

Appendix A

Supervisor Interview Schedule

Name_____ Position_____

School_____ Date_____

I. Community Participation

1. How would you describe the amount of community involvement in this school since September?

2. How would you compare this year's participation in the parents' association with last year's?

3. Generally, how would you categorize parental satisfaction with the Tri-Schools?

4. Does any particular group (or groups) stand out as being especially happy with the Tri-Schools? Explain.

5. Which groups seem least satisfied? Explain.

II. Curriculum & Supervision

1. You were introduced to two large changes at once -- first the Tri-Schools and second, the abolition of tracking. Have your curricula been able to sustain these changes?

2. In which subject area(s) are your curricula most adequate?

3. In which subject area(s) are your curricula weakest?

4. How would you compare the nature and amount of assistance with instructional matters that you are able to give your teachers in the Tri-Schools as compared with that given before the reorganization?

5. How would you compare the opportunities which teachers have had for in-service growth and development under the two systems?

6. Your school has been exposed to a number of new innovations, such as teaching machines, programmed instruction, etc. Have you come to any conclusions about retaining or dropping any of these programs during the coming year? (Take each one listed.)

Supervisor Interview Schedule, Cont'd

III. Pupil Achievement

1. How would you compare pupil achievement in the Tri-Schools with that of last year's students? Explain.

2. Do you notice any differences in pupil motivation this year?

3. How would you compare the nature and amount of disciplinary problems in the Tri-Schools with that in comparable schools last year?

   a. During school hours?

   b. After school hours?

IV. General

1. What are the major advantages of reorganization as you see them?

2. What are the major disadvantages?

3. Which modifications for improvement would you suggest for this program?

4. If you had your choice, would you continue with the reorganization or revert back to the old system? Explain.

Appendix B

Teacher Interview Schedule

Teacher_____Class_____Grade_____

Former School_____Grade_____

1. How would you compare your experience in the Tri-Schools with that in a regular school?

2. I understand that a great many new curricular innovations have been introduced in this school. Have any of these reached your class? Which? For each one listed: How do you feel about it? How has it worked for you?

3. You were introduced to two large changes at once -- first the Tri-Schools and then the abolition of tracking. Has your curriculum proved adequate for these changes?

4. In which areas is the curriculum most adequate?

5. Where could the curriculum stand revision? How would you compare the nature and amount of assistance from supervisors you've gotten this year with last year's? How would you compare pupil achievement this year with that of last year's students?

6. Do you notice any differences in pupils' attitudes toward school this year?

7. How would you compare the nature and amount of disciplining problems this year with those in comparable classes last year?

8. Which do you see as the major advantage of the Tri-Schools?

9. What is the major disadvantage?

10. If you had your way, would you continue the Tri-School organization? Explain.

Appendix C

Public Schools of the District of Columbia

EVALUATION UNIT
ESEA Title III Programs

Dear Parent:

For the purpose of evaluating ESEA Title III programs your school system is interested in getting the reactions of parents to our schools in which we have these programs. This will help us in finding ways to improve education. Please answer the questions below by marking an X by the answer that applies to you and place this sheet in the blank envelope enclosed. Please seal the envelopes. Although your child's teacher will collect them, she will not see the responses. Do not sign your name on either this sheet or the envelope.

Thank you for your cooperation.

1a. How do you feel about your child's progress in school this year? (check one)

Poor___Fair___Good___Very good___

b. How does his (her) progress compare with last year?

Much worse___Worse___Same___Better___Much better___

2a. How does he (she) like school this year?

Dislikes school___Neutral___Likes school___

b. How does this compare with last year?

Much worse___Worse___Same___Better___Much better___

3. How much reading does he do this year as compared with last year?

Less___Same___More___

4. Have you attended any meetings for parents at the school during this school year?

Yes___No___

5. Have you met with your child's teacher to discuss his progress in school at any time?

Yes___No___

Appendix D

Ohio Social Acceptance Scale

Directions: On a separate sheet you will find the name of every student in your class. We want you to put a number on the line in front of every name.

Are there any people in this room whom you would like to have as your very, very best friends? If so, place the number 1 in front of their names.	1 "Very, very best friends."
Put the number 2 in front of the name of every person whom you would like to have as a good friend. These people are not your very, very closest friends, but you would like them to be good friends of yours.	2 "Good friends."
Put the number 3 in front of the name of every person who is not a friend, but who you think is all right. These are people with whom you would just as soon work or play. You think they are all right. They are not friends, but they are okay just the same.	3 "Not friends, but okay."
Put the number 4 in front of the name of every person whom you don't know very well. Maybe you would like them and maybe you wouldn't. You don't know. Where you don't know a person well enough to rate them, put the number 4 in front of that name.	4 "Don't know them."
After you have given the numbers 1 or 2 or 3 or 4 to people in the room, there may be some names that you haven't marked yet.	5 "All others."

Further directions: Start with the top of the list and go down, making sure there is one number, and only one number, in front of every name. When you come to your own name, write the number 0.